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ABSTRACT

Northern Oklahoma College's current system of faculty evaluation emphasizes evaluation as an ongoing process rather than a once-a-year occurrence. New faculty members are presented with a checklist of evaluation criteria and expectations, which is to serve as a guide for performance and an avenue for communication with the department chair. Recently, it became apparent that this checklist was not as effective as it could be and efforts have been undertaken to alter the evaluation process from a strictly superior-subordinate system to one incorporating self-evaluation. In revising the evaluation form, several factors were considered: (1) a common descriptive set of criteria should be employed in self-evaluations and supervisor evaluations; (2) the goals and purposes of the institution must be used as the basis for establishing evaluation criteria, which should cover total professional behavior; (3) professionalism and accountability must be part of the evaluation approach; and (4) the evaluation process should be organized, consistent, pervasive, and specific. On the basis of these considerations, a self-evaluation instrument has been proposed focusing on effective instruction, advising responsibilities, non-class responsibilities, and general professional activities. The aim of the new form is to encourage instructors to be personally accountable for their professional role and to emphasize evaluation as a source of instruction rather than as a punitive process. The self-evaluation instrument is appended. (KL)

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A CONCERN FOR PROFESSIONALISM

Gerald E. Burson

A NOTE OF EXPLANATION

The attached paper is one prepared for the faculty here at Northern Oklahoma College as the initial step in moving away from a superior-subordinate evaluation system to one that incorporated self-evaluation. The evaluation check sheet was also prepared by me. The check sheet as is indicated in the paper is considered a beginning rather than a finished product.

If evaluation is to meet its primary purpose, to bring about improvement, it must be seen as something other than a punitive process. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is to involve the people in the evaluation process. This must be done at a level and in a manner that is conducive to positive action. At this institution it is hoped that evaluation is an ongoing process rather than a once a year item. A description of the process is the best way to indicate this.

When a new faculty member is being interviewed he is presented our philosophy of evaluation and the evaluation check sheet to review. At this time he is able to see the areas of evaluation and the areas of expectation. The check sheet becomes a guide and an avenue for communication by the division chairman. As the new faculty member is oriented to institutional philosophy through division level conferences during the year, the evaluation criteria are used as discussion points. These contacts provide opportunity for faculty input and feedback to the process as well as a recognition that evaluation is ongoing rather than a one shot affair. The key to operating in this manner is effective divisional leadership.

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A CONCERN FOR PROFESSIONALISM

This past year there has been more time devoted to and concern about evaluation techniques than in the past. A greater effort always produces more new insights into the process and procedures involved. After the spring conferences and the updating of the faculty handbook, it became apparent that our present faculty evaluation form was not as good as it could be. So once again an attempt has been made to make it more effective. At this time it is still in the reforming stage. Between now and November 15, careful study needs to be made concerning its final form.

Evaluation is always a trying process both for the evaluator and the evaluatee. Yet evaluation is a constant process. As individuals we evaluate behavior and its effectiveness of our peers, friends, superiors, students, children and ourselves. We do not mind making these evaluations because generally they are not communicated to others, especially our self-evaluation, unless it turns out to be a positive one.

No one likes to be evaluated unless he or she is confident about the outcome. It is very difficult to be confident about an evaluation unless you know the criteria against which your performance will be viewed. On the other hand, when one has a descriptive set of criteria for evaluation, these should become the guidelines for performance. When the criteria are available and a person makes consistent and concentrated effort to meet these criteria, then it is a self-evaluation and an evaluation by another person is made, there should be a great amount of similarity between these two appraisals.

Techniques of evaluation must be learned just as other skills are. This skill does not occur just because a person is charged with this responsibility. This is true for self-evaluation as well as peer evaluation.

All evaluations of persons in working situations have one purpose and that is to determine how that individual is handling his share of the responsibilities in helping the institution or business reach its goals. Therefore, the goals and purposes of the institution must be used as the basis for establishing the criteria for evaluation.

Northern Oklahoma College is a public state-supported institution which is officially charged with these responsibilities:

> "Public two-year colleges should have primary and ultimately exclusive responsibility for students whose objectives do not include the completion of a baccalaureate or higher degree. These institutions are encouraged to develop comprehensive programs, including general education, transfer, vocational technical, adult education, community service, and remedial programs." (Plan for the 70's, State Regents for Higher Education.)

These goals are not descriptive of how an institution accomplishes them. It is this variability in accomplishing these goals that sets institutions apart professionally.

At Northern the concept of professionalism is set on a high plateau and the scope is very broad. Only with this type of goal can an institution maintain its rank among peers and the public. Only through attention to attaining these goals can a group of professionals excel and be pleased with their achievements. It is within this spirit and dedication that consistent effort and evaluation of that effort occurs.

If one listens to professional educators' shop talk, some of these comments are usually heard: most of my students don't know how to study; only a few of my students really dig in and enjoy the course; there are

always some students that never get things in on time; if students would only come to class prepared, it would change the tenor of the sessions; many of my students are reluctant to do a thorough job on an assignment. The list can go on and on and usually does. If these statements are reviewed, they are simply statements of behavior evaluation against some form of criteria. The criteria are implied and seldom identified.

In another sense these statements are evaluations of the professionals who have been charged with teaching these students in the past. It could be a negative evaluation of those teachers or their techniques.

Without question, the instructional time with students is the most important thing a college instructor does. It is on this basis that he should be evaluated. But let's look at some things that could be meant by "instructional time with students." Usually one thinks of the fifteen to twenty classroom hours an instructor spends with students, but is this the only "instructional time?" Also, is the instructor responsible only for the material of his course? What about the concomitant parts of being a "professional educator?" In the criticisms listed above by instructors, much more than lack of subject knowledge is being evaluated. Things such as work habits, study skills, attitude development, independence and possibly much more are being judged. From the comments made, it appears the college instructors believe that the previous professionals left a lot of work to be done.

These criticisms are based on some criteria and as we analyze the implications of these statements the criteria begin to appear. The statements imply that the students have not developed positive attitudes toward school, good work habits, study skills and independence; thus these

identified behaviors become the criteria of student measurement for those instructors. With the discovery and identification of these criteria some important questions should be asked by a professional educator. If the learning of the skills was not accomplished and they haven't been mastered, are they still part of the teaching job? If, as a teacher, I am responsible to see that my students learn, when have I done enough for them? When do I give up on a student? If, as part of a professional group, do I have responsibilities to my colleagues, to the public, as well as to the student? How do I appear to my colleagues? Am I considered an "average" instructor? Am I a positive professional model for a new instructor? Do I set positive examples of work habits, punctuality in meeting classes, returning assignments to students, being prepared for class?

The identification of these criteria on which prior teaching is judged have to be looked at as far as present teaching is concerned. In fact the criteria, derived from the institution's goals, can and should be extended to cover total professional behavior. When this is attempted more legitimate questions are raised.

As a professional, can I convey to a prospective student and his parents the opportunities available at Northern? Can I rise above the bias for my own field and encourage students into programs for which they are best suited? Do I actively and independently pursue further education both in my field and instructional techniques? Do my students see me as an instructor that encourages conferences to facilitate learning? Do my peers view me as a professional? If salary raises for all were based on my performance as a total professional, would they rise or fall? Would my colleagues select me to represent them if their salaries were based on one individual's performance? Am I aware of the need to educate the lay public to the opportunities and needs of higher education?

The list of implied criteria behaviors is not, nor can it be, complete. The list of behaviors that constitute a large part of the criteria for evaluation of a professional might best be summed up in this way. Am I an instructor that strives to set the example of what a professional educator is, or do I fall into that category of being a reluctant professional meeting minimums and squeaking through the years?

As has been mentioned in the past, the term "accountability" is here to stay. We individually and higher education collectively are not being asked to account for the successes and failures in teaching. It is interesting that for both points, success and failure, we have little definitive data on which we can rely. Yet, the fact remains that we are accountable.

The approach of this new form is obvious. It attempts to make each of us aware of what should be done and asks us to account for ourselves. We are judged by our peers, superiors, students and the lay public. Their criteria are not organized or consistent but they evaluate just the same. This new approach is organized, consistent, pervasive and specific. It provides us with a set of guidelines and a technique for measurement. It is not complete and it certainly is not perfect, but it attempts to deal with the major components of a professional educator's responsibilities.

It would be wonderful if no evaluations occurred. Better still, it would be tremendous if evaluations occurred and all of us received a perfect rating but reality lies between these two extremes. We must accept the fact that the lay public and our students will make evaluations and that the future and direction of higher education depends on the results of these evaluations. As educated people, we should utilize this knowledge and our special skills to help us prepare for the event and guarantee a positive and rewarding critique.

Between now and November 15th it is hoped that the Faculty Affairs Committee and the Academic Standards Committee can create a form that will be useful, instructive and effective. Also a set of guidelines need to be developed for the use or uses of the form.

There is no issue about if there will be evaluation. The public has said there will be consistent evaluation if higher education is to receive tax money. Our job as professional educators is to jointly assume this task and jointly create an effective and productive method of evaluation which is derived from our stated goals.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. What were your major goals first semester?

2. What were your major achievements first semester?

3. What are your major goals for this semester?

4. What are your plans for formal continuing education this summer?

5. What major changes do you anticipate in courses this semester from last semester? Either content or process.

EVALUATION CHECK SHEET

PART I - EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTION

In my estimation I (am):

	ALWAYS	USUALLY	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
prepare well-organized class lectures.					
arrive before class time.					
provide the students with a well-structured course syllabus.					
update my course materials each year.					
accept overload teaching situations with understanding.					
am willing to try new approaches to instruction.					
am consistently seeking courses or in-service training to improve my effectiveness.					
able to document grades and grading practices.					
spend my non-class assigned hours in my office.					
have fifteen or more student visits a week for out-of-class help.					
seek the advice of a colleague on instructional techniques.					
subscribe to or read from the college library a journal or book in my field or a journal or book relating to instructing in my field each month.					
prepare tests that are drawn from the course objectives in the syllabus.					
prepare tests that are consistent with my teaching techniques.					

PART II - EFFECTIVENESS OF STUDENT ADVISEMENT FUNCTIONS

In my estimation I (am):

	ALWAYS	USUALLY	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
working to find better methods of communicating with my advisees.					
keep a current personnel folder on each advisee.					
make out a graduation check sheet form for all second semester freshmen.					
personally check the trial study against the student's records and his degree plan before approving it.					
evaluate the problems students have as to whether or not they should make an appointment with the counseling center.					
try to provide a student with study habit guidelines if he is making unsatisfactory progress.					
make extra time available to work with students' problems.					
help the student check, if he is a transfer student, the catalog from the senior institution to make sure he is working toward his desired objective.					
review career possibilities for a student based upon completion of X degree program.					
request that first semester sophomores review their transcripts with me when I make a graduation check.					
review a student's ACT Scores, H.S. grades, and discuss his career objectives with him in light of this information.					

PART III - EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTITUTIONAL
NON-CLASS RESPONSIBILITIES

In my estimation I (am):

	ALWAYS	USUALLY	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
meet data deadlines for administrative offices; division chairman, registrar, business office, deans, president.					
complete the card sequence for my advisees that drop or add classes.					
use the formulated institutional policy to order materials or supplies.					
follow the formulated institutional policy to order materials or supplies.					
effectively work as a member of standing and ad hoc committees.					
am alert for ways that could increase my or others institutional effectiveness and follow through with suggestions.					
am willing to volunteer my services beyond normal working hours to help the institution meet both routing or special problems.					

PART IV - EFFECTIVENESS OF GENERAL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

In my estimation I:

	ALWAYS	USUALLY	OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
am willing to participate as a speaker for lay groups.					
am willing to assist student organizations.					
am willing to make a special effort to meet the area high school instructors that are in the same teaching field.					
make at least 5 personal contacts with high school counterparts and offer to make a presentation to their classes.					
attempt to provide myself and my material as a resource person for area high school counterparts.					

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